Through Shattered Glass

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Through Shattered Glass

by Blue64

Summary

Molly is content in her marriage, except for one thing. She has no idea what Will's past is like and he won't tell her, no matter how hard she tries. It's breaking their marriage apart more and more by the day and she can't simply ignore it. Convinced the only way to move forward is to do her own investigating, Molly set's out on a treacherous path searching for answers she might not want. All the while she must do her best to keep Will, the living lie detector, clueless.

She'll cross paths with many of the terrifying creatures from Will's life and must keep her motivations a secret if she has any chance of finding answers.

Notes

It's a little rough but here it is. This is from Molly's POV so it's quite different from how I normally write Hannibal fics. She's has a lot more clarity and a stronger sense of black and white, sometimes that means she's a bit more simplistic than what I'd make Will or Hannibal. Also assuming this is before the start of 3b, Wally is a bit younger here. Enjoy reading! I've already written. few more chapters so if theres some interest I'll edit and post them.

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

It was difficult, but so were all marriages. Affairs, crazy families, long-distance relationships. So many couples had so many problems. All they had to deal with was the past. Not that she knew, *per se,* what that past was.

But it was certainly horrific, full or murder, corpse defilement and cannibalism. She had, of course, googled it a few times, seen pictures she wish she hadn't and read articles that made her sick to her stomach. The hardest part was how confused every article made her. So many of them were conflicting. "Hero Investigator Will Graham" vs. " The FBI's Most Controversial, Psychopathic Profiler Returns". She knew somehow he'd been tried for murders but then later acquitted. She also knew he'd had the cannibal they called 'Hannibal Lecter' for a therapist.

But that was about it.

She enjoyed their life too much to pry, Will was kind and generous to her and Wally. He was great at teaching him all the things a dad could, like which tadpoles would soon be frogs, how to fix rusty motors and what to do when you're feeling scared. It was not just Wally either, he spent so much time caring for his dogs, even when they sometimes bit him or tried to runaway. He had this way of drawing them back in and leading them home over and over. She'd never seen anything like it.

Sometimes she felt like those dogs, she'd be upset from a shitty day at work and before she would even walk in the door he'd have a hot chocolate and a movie on.

Wally would hide an injury he got from playing after curfew and Will could sense it from miles away.

Investigators were of course, brilliant observationalist, but it always felt like much more than that, and it was so very nice.

Her last two boyfriends had needed intense reminders to remember her birthday or to not yell in the house because it'd scare Wally, . Will was never like that, he knew her unspoken rules immediately.

In contrast, she only knew one of his.

It was ridiculously frustrating to try and match the image of Will she'd read online and the one she saw.

So sometimes she pushed.

One of the pushing days, dinner had been a noodle delivery, since Wally was at a friends and neither of them felt like cooking.

They were curled up on the couch watching some crappy news show when it showed a very brief photo of Will. It was him in a prison jumpsuit being escorted out of a high-security van. The story moved on but they both stayed frozen.

She tried as gently as she could, even as the tension prickled against her. “You know, if you ever want to talk about….well.. anything, I promise I’m here for you and I won;t judge. If not, well, you don’t have explain anything.”

She watched him closely, saw a small part of him relax but the rest stayed coiled, it would stay like that for a few days even after this conversation.

“Molly…… I- ….I don’t”

She could almost hear the thousands of thoughts that rushed through that head, knew he was submerged somewhere else for the briefest of moments. And then, he returned to her. “I don’t think it would help anyone. You’ve been so patient with me, I know, but it’s just……no, not-”

“It’s fine Will. You're a good person, that’s all I ever need.”

It was meant to set him at ease but she saw something else flicker across his face instead.

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The next few times had all been similar.

Some kid at school had apparently worked out that the man who picked Wally up looked alot like a newspaper clipping at his house. Apparently, the kid’s dad had won a sporting event on the day of one of the murders and decided to memorialise it in a frame.

Will had simply told Wally that he used to be police, and that, one day he went after a bad guy and the reporters put it in the paper.

It may have satisfied Wally but it left something gnawing in her. Will could see her discomfort, she was sure. He got a little more skittish and walked on constant egg shells.

She didn’t make a fuss, though she could’ve. They had to move Wally to a different school because some of the other parents had *apparently* weighed in about their concerns. She was sure it was just Mrs. Kitrid who had it out for Wally in the beginning.

From there, it never came up directly again. Sometimes she’d nudge a little bit, ask where his old house had been, what a certain scar was from, how he’d learnt to fish properly.

He never outright lied, but he did tell her partial truths. He’d lived in Virginia, he’d learnt to fish as a kid but he’d liked fly fishing far more than regular fishing, ect.

Sometimes he just stayed silent if it was a question he couldn’t or didn’t want to answer. Like the time she asked about scars.

She'd seem them plenty, when they ran into the river on warm sunny mornings, or when he'd change into loose pyjamas after a strenuous but peaceful day.

After he stayed silent, she never asked him again.

It was okay, it's not as if he knew every detail of her past life either. That's how it works, you find a new person and if you're lucky enough to have them become your whole world, then you carve out your own sliver of time together.

And that's what they did so perfectly.

They watched crappy movies, helped Wally with homework, sat by the fire and drank, had snowball fights that ended in warm showers for everyone.

He watched her and she watched him. They both put in the pieces for a happy life, going to great efforts to sustain it. She talked honestly and with a frankness that used to bother her family. He listened and absorbed every drop.

When he would retreat into himself she let him be, content at knowing he always came back out again. It was like holding the leash of a balloon, it would drift away slightly until it reached the end of its tether, then it would steadily float back.

The newest problem was the dreams. When Will no longer had full control over his mind. Afterwards, she watched him drenched in sweat and skittish, shakily putting his glasses on and pacing around the house. Doing what, she was never sure.

It freaked her out big time when Will had woken up and asked questions that didn't make any sense.

Questions about people she didn't know, and creatures like pigs, stags, and dragonflies.

None of it seemed even remotely connected to the few articles she'd read.

He apologised profusely in the mornings. Saying he'd just been confused or had strange dreams. She took that as an insult to her intelligence.

Normally she would've suggested he see someone for a session or two, just to figure things out a bit. But even that was ruined by what she knew about his previous experiences with psychiatrists.

In the middle of all of this, Wally's grades were dropping and she was desperately trying to spend as much time as she could trying to help fix them.

On the bad days she felt paper thin, unable to do more than run from fire to fire, dousing what she found.

If she could just *know*, understand what happened to Will, at least she might know what she was up against, might figure out a way to fix it. They had managed to fix almost everything else.

One night, after another consecutive week of Will's nightmares, she put Wally to sleep early and sat on the couch next to Will. Sometimes he was a little strange about eye contact so she thought the tv would be a good distraction.

"Hey."

"Hey."

"Is Wally asleep?" He sounded a little asleep himself.

"He will be soon, all that tree-climbing really took it out of him. Took it out of me too, I felt like I was gonna have to catch him the whole time."

He laughed and she felt a tinge of guilt for what she was about to do.

"I thought, since Wally's in bed, we could talk a bit about you."

"Me?"

She felt herself melt a little at the way he said, equal parts surprise and displeasure. He'd never been one for the spotlight, normally she respected that and made up for it herself in spades. She was never one to be shy.

"Yeah you, Mr. Graham." sometimes they called each other by their last names for fun but after they got married it had obviously lost some of its appeal.

"What about? I didn't step on any more toes at the school again did I? I only don't attend those PA meetings because –"

"It's not that Will."

Suddenly he knew, he knew every part of her meaning. His face turned stony and cold, lacking it's animated quality from seconds before. Barriers she'd spent months breaking down were replaced in mere seconds. Nothing ever had this effect on him other than discussions about the past.

"I know I don't push and that I said you don't have to talk…. but I think you should try. I'm here to help Will, you know that."

"Molly I–"

"You're getting worse, the nightmares are coming more often and you stay shaken for days. Yesterday I asked you for something three times and it was as if you couldn't hear me at all!"

"It's not–"

"And you don't have to tell me all of it, just start with a section, a day, a person, something!" She took a deep breath, "Maybe even start from the first case you did wi-"

"*Molly*. You have to trust to me on this, *please*. I wish I could tell you….." He looked down at his hands, "I'm afraid that once it starts pouring out of me it won't stop."

She grabbed one of his hands and clasped it in her own. They were cold and soft.

"Then let it. I'm a big girl and I don't scare easy." She meant it, with all of her heart.

He pulled his hand away and stared at her with those deep intelligent eyes.

She was stung before he even spoke.

"I believe you, but I don't think I can ever tell you, I'm so, so sorry."

A part of her wanted to punch and scream and yell. To tell him that she had every right to know because it impacted them, *her*, everyday. That if he couldn't trust her, how could their marriage ever work?

She felt her face heat and useless tears starting to bite. Hot and full of venom. She took a breath, and reached deep inside herself for patience. Will had taught her that, he always stayed so calm through everything. Now at least, she could use it against him.

"I'm going to bed."

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They continued making it work. Like they always did, tag-teaming in a way good work friends and siblings do. But it lacked the heart it needed. She made sure of that.

The dogs were walked, the drain pipe repaired, the car serviced. It all ran like clockwork.

He bought her favourite brand of ice cream, dealt with Wally when he was throwing a tantrum, bought her the stack of books she'd always been eyeing.

It was maddening because, like usual, Will correctly interpreted her every glance, shiver, smile and more. He was never wrong and it became next to impossible to stay angry.

He knew her in a way she barely knew herself and it was difficult to resist.

So, she let it go. Slowly let her heart bleed back into their home. Laughed at stupid jokes on the tv, made fun of his bed hair, snuggled with the dogs.

One night, she woke up to a furnace next to her. She didn't even need to look to know Will was having a nightmare again. She sat up ready to fetch a towel but paused when she could make out muttered words.

"It's….. he knows. He knows, everything— it's all…."

He began to get more frantic and suddenly move.

"Will, it's me. You're safe, you're dreaming."

She tried it a few more times louder, but it had absolutely no effect.

She pinned his shoulders and tried to shake him awake.

“Slaughterhouses…. sounders….”

“Will! Wake up!”

He only increasingly got more frantic and buckled underneath her.

“Will! You need–”

His eyes flew open and in less than a second he reversed the pin, forcing her chest deep into the bed. He’d bit his lip at some point and it was bleeding in a small trickle.

“Will?”

He woke up for a second time and immediately released her. He ran his hand through his hair and shook his head violently.

“Molly?I’m s –”

She already knew what would be next and silenced it with her own dismissal.

“It’s ok Will. Really. You were having a nightmare. Let me get you a towel and a fresh set of clothes”

She took a few seconds herself to recover before reemerging with the towel and clothes.

He looked like absolute hell, she started to feel a weight pulling at her insides. They were supposed to support each other at their worst and this was by far the worst she’d seen. Bu there was nothing she could even do. No words of comfort and wisdom. No promises about what they would undo together.

Staring at Will with sweat dripping down the side of his face and the soft shakes he was suppressing, her mind made itself, Will would probably never tell her what happened, but someone else could.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was difficult to know where to begin. She was no detective, but she was determined. Reports had Hannibal Lecter at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane as little as 6 weeks ago. She found out that almost no one was allowed access to him except for his lawyer, psychiatrists and hospital staff.

A few PHD researchers had apparently been let in over the years but none had returned. She was beginning to feel he was more monster than man, newspapers read like modern day fairytales, laced with warnings and fear. She could right it off as journalist dramatics but she couldn't ignore her own intuition. Intuition born from the breath of her husband's nightmares and uncensored crime photos, more mutilitation than death.

She reminded herself he'd been locked away for two years now, a monster that could be caged was much less daunting. The head of the prison, an Alana Bloom, ran everything with an iron fist. She had apparently been some acquaintance of Lecter, and Will too. She changed his guards almost every week, personally supervised outdoor time, and screened every visitor – all according to some more obscure crime website she'd found.

She could maybe talk to this Alana Bloom instead of Lecter, see if she could provide the blanks she was so desperate to fill. She clearly knew Lecter and Will.

But it hadn't been Blooms photo against every picture of her husband. It hadn't been Bloom who had been her husband's psychiatrist for years. If she was unearthing this, she would dig through everything.

Luckily, through a computer error, she was still registered at the college she studied at when she was in her 20s. It gave her access to everything she would need to build a fake PHD proposal and, it used her maiden name, Townsend, since it was long before she'd ever met Will.

She tried to find what all the previous researchers had been studying but only one of the articles listed an actual thesis. "Psychopathy and the Effects of Extenuating Isolation in State Run Hospitals", apparently the trip had been a failure since she could find no mention of Dr Lecter in the entire paper.

She spent a while brainstorming reasonable research ideas when she finally settled. "A Study of Functioning Memory in U.S Criminals" she tried to bulk up the fake paper with references to similar studies that highlighted the deterioration of memory through emotional reframing. It was morbid stuff, full of criminals who forgot the police even arrested them after an assault or a child abuse case where the mother appeared to have no memory of ever having a child. She figured her visit would fit right in.

She was also quite satisfied with her proposal since it meant she could ask about the past with almost complete immunity.

Next came researching the ways one could even submit research requests to mental hospitals, she just stared searching when there was the sound of keys in the front door.

She didn't have to do much to hide, simply close the pages on her computer, but she felt startled none the less. The footsteps came closer until her door opened revealing a rosy-cheeked Will.

He was holding two coffees in a tray.

"Thought you might appreciate a certain caramel laced beverage."

She briefly forgot he thought she was still mad. She took it gladly and perhaps, a little guiltily.

"Where did you even go? The closest coffee place that even sells these is-"

"Georgia's Bean house, over on eastside."

That was an hour drive at least, he'd warmed it up again somehow because it was still steaming hot.

"What would I do without you" she said as she pulled him closer.

"Probably have less of a caffeine addiction for one."

She laughed and circled his waist, and he relaxed, the nervous edge he'd been carrying all week quickly disapparating.

She wondered what he'd do if, right now, she confessed to everything. She'd never seen him properly mad, normally he'd bottle it up, let his resentment leak out bit by bit. She'd yet to see him truly fly off the handle. He'd never once yelled or become violent with her or Wally, it's one of the reasons she trusted him so much.

She let go of him and notioned to her computer. She was about to make some excuse about admin work but he beat her too it.

"It's ok. I'll let you keep doing whatever you were doing, you looked hard at work when I arrived."

She smiled, "Thanks Will."

He left, even closing the door, and she continued to scan through pages of information on research application.

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5 weeks she had to wait, she knew it was a slow process but the hospital could hardly even be admitting patients at that pace.

She waited until Will had left and it was just her and Wally home. Wally was busy drawing all over his homework book so she finally had the space to open the email.

Dear Ms. Foster,

We have considered your application for research and view it as vitally important and relevant to the patients here at the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

As such, you will proceed to the next stage of screening before finally being admitted to interact with patients. During this period you will need to outline any specific behaviours you intend to examine as well as your research frameworks, publishing journals, and period of study. You will also be briefed on our code of conduct policy (Attached below) and any of the requirements for particular patients.

Your screening will take place at: 11:30am Thursday

If you cannot attend, please reply to this email with your dates of availability. Otherwise, we hope to meet you in person soon.

Sincerely,

The BSHCI research division.

She'd done it! She was, at the very least going to have a shot at meeting Hannibal Lecter.

A small chill still went through her at the thought, her victory was uneasily mixing with trepidation.

"Mom? Is something wrong?"

Discarded pencils were slewn everywhere and the page Wally had been working on was completely covered in colours, almost no white shone through.

"No honey, just good news is all."

He smiled and she smiled wider too.

He was straight back to colouring in an instant.

"Did you want another piece of paper?"

He took a very serious moment considering, glancing between his paper and her, eventually he settled. "I don't think so."

His markers continued colouring the poor page to death and she began to write her own flimsy research paper, feeling a bit like she was trying to paint the Mona Lisa with Wally's markers.

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His arm was warm and soft around her shoulder, for the first time in awhile, she felt close to him again. Like she had gained another piece back.

He was reading a book but closed it when he caught her watching him.

“I’m being boring company aren’t I?”

She wriggled a little closer, “You could never be boring, although, that book is a different story.”

He laughed and put it down altogether, using his other hand to pull her into a half hug.

“Wally told me you had good news.”

“Hmm? oh yeah, do you remember that friend I had? Margaret Polozki? She’s getting married.”

“And to think, we didn’t even get an invite”

“Who said we didn’t get an invite?”

He gave a teasing look and she relented, “Fine we didn’t get an invite, it’s a little difficult when we live in the middle of nowhere….”

She was a little nervous with the lie, well, half truth. Margaret really did have a wedding recently.

“Molly, I wanted to ask you something.”

She could feel herself getting hot and sweaty, she was sure her heartbeat was now in her throat.

“I want you to answer honestly, ok? no just saying what you think I want to hear.”

Now the guilt was ripping through her, she was beginning to stockpile arguments in her mind.

“Are you happy here?”

her stomach untensed and her fingers uncurled, she relaxed back into the couch. Confusion quickly took the place filled by stress seconds ago.

“Happy?”

He nodded and she was forced to wrap her around this new question.

“I think so, where we live is beautiful, Wally is mostly happy at school, I think, and we get to spend our days doing whatever we want.”

“Whatever you want? There’s nothing you feel… restricted from?”

“Not really. One day I’d like to go to Hawaii or something….. why do you ask?”

“Because, I want you to feel happy here, and free.”

She was going to ask him whether he was happy here too but thought she’d rather not find out the answer just yet.

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“You’ll be seeing Mrs. Bloom soon. It’s uh, kinda a requirement for *your* type of research.”

“Sure.”

She tried to present the strongest aura of academia she could. She’d even chosen a blazer and worn glasses she didn’t need. If she looked the part, maybe she could feel it too.

The attendant continued leading the way through corridors that varied from the old and decrepit to the newly painted. Sometimes they went past patients and she gazed curiously at them while they watched her back through foggy eyes.

Eventually they arrived at the main office, clearly marked by it’s massive exterior and expensive wooden finishings.

“Remember, she dislikes arrogance and inauthenticity. I’ve worked under her for a while and while she’s fair, she’s not afraid to challenge anyone. I’ve seen two psychology professors look like they were about to be sick when they left.”

“Okay. thanks for the help.”

The attendant winked and held the door open. It was putting her off, all this pretend familiarity.

The office she entered was much like the mismatch of the rest of the prison. It was a paradox of subtle ostentatiousness. Gold trimmings on draws, mahogany desks, expensive pens in small plain boxes. She’d never seen a psychiatrist before, let alone one that ran a hospital, and yet she felt that at some level, this was a little abnormal.

The woman she presumed was Alana was already seated in a round cushioned chair. It shared the gold trimmings of the draws.

“Welcome Ms Townsend” She gave a smile that had a strong air of professional congeniality.

“We don’t get that many visitors that aren’t direct friends and family of the patients so forgive me if I’m a little overbearing.”

“You are completely forgiven since I can’t thank you enough for allowing me this opportunity.”

She feared she'd said the wrong thing when Alana briefly frowned but she returned to it's smiling professionalism within moments.

"Yes, your theseus did spark my curiosity I'll admit. I have always been interested in the topic of memory. It's after all, what informs our moral compass, defines our struggles, and most of all, gives us identity."

She thought back to something Will talked about once, her mouth repeating his words. "Memories are thunderstorm libraries, we collect each one, carefully catalogue it, imprint it with feeling and place it on a shelf of other like it. But, even the best kept libraries are full of thunder and wind, tossing books randomly, sending us colour and meaning with no explanation and in the process, destroying some books completely."

She hadn't meant to ramble but had quickly lost herself in Will's analogies.

Alana considered her with a curious look, "Is this why you want to study on of our most infamous patient? See what kind of lightning illuminates the mind of a killer?"

She knew this was the real test, could feel it in the way Alana's eyes studied her, eyes quickly darting from side to side.

"I want to study memory in everyone, every type of person. We deserve that, the knowledge of what *every* mind does, not just the normal and rational. If we exclude the ones who scare us, make us forgot exactly what human is supposed to look like, we won't ever understand how any minds function."

She hoped she'd passed as Alana leaned backwards and relaxed.

"Do you know what happened to previous researchers such as yourself?"

She started to nod then shook her head. She'd only heard of a couple of cases and none of them in particular detail.

"Academically speaking, almost none of them actually published a real theseus….. But I have high hopes for you Molly, there's something in you that I just can't quite place." She paused for a moment, "Have we met before?"

Her breath stopped, "No, I don't think so."

Alana nodded and looked a little wistful but soon changed, clasping her hands together and making direct eye contact.

"Now, to brief you on Hannibal."

If she really was conducting psychological observations she certainly would have noted the invisible shiver that went through Alana as she said his name.

"He's antagonistic, of supremely high intelligence, and always, always watching. Every move you make will be noted, dissected and likely used against you."

“What purpose does that serve?”

She shrugged, “Amusement, gratification. I’d say he’s bored, too long without any stimulation means everything becomes a chew toy.”

“Should I try to be nice?”

“Oh yes, your manners will be the key to how he treats you. He’s far more likely to play ball if he likes you.”

She was starting to feel more and more nervous. Her fingers thrummed against her stack of fake documents.

“*Likes* me? I was under the impression he was a psychopath, incapable of truly *liking* or *disliking*”

Alana immediately shook her head. “Psychopath is only what the court termed him, I’m not sure anybody really has a proper definition. Hannibal is not unfeeling. He feels everything, perhaps deeper than most, the difference is, it is not the barrier against violence that it is for you and me. Hannibal can love something completely just as easily as he kills it.”

Visions of the case photos, mutilated bodies, quickly crossed through her mind. “And if he doesn’t like me?”

“Then I suggest you go far away and find some other murderer.”

Her tapping finger stilled and her knuckles turned white.

Alana continued. “Unfortunately I’ll be unable to supervise, a matter with a previous researcher around the legality of recordings has made me rather useless. Since I’m not there to end the session, I recommend you leave the moment you need to, and not a second later. Do you understand?”

She nodded and began steeling herself.

“Are you ready soon?”

She nodded.

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The light and tress in the windows disappeared as she began to descend the stair case to the basement.

Natural light was instead replaced by artificial fluros that left no corner untouched. The whole way she considered turning back, this was now quickly become her point of no return.

If she left she could return home and never say a word about this to Will or anyone else ever again. They could go probably go on despite the gap in their hole in their lives. They’d certainly learned to step around it enough.

If she talked to Hannibal Lecter instead, she would be bringing home his specter.

She glanced at the cells, wondering which one had housed Will. What he had looked like, what had he felt as he waited for a potential death sentence. There was so little she knew, that he talked about. The giant blanks are what kept her moving.

Eventually they reached a door. Alana placed a gentle hand on her shoulder.

“It’s not to late to leave you know. As a psychiatrist I must insist that research always comes secondary to your mental health.”

A part of her felt mad, she was sick of this sense of the fear and myth around Lecter. How bad, how mind-altering could this man be truly be? Would a conversation honestly even pose a threat to her? she doubted it. He knew nothing about her, had nothing to work with except for what she would choose to tell him.

“I’m not leaving.”

Alana retracted her hand and sighed. “Okay. you may go in whenever you want to then.”

She took a breath in and out. Slowly, feeling her chest rise and fall while air softly brushed the tops of her lips.

The door handle was cold and jarring as soon as she wrapped her fingers around it, she pushing on into the room regardless.

It was a large area, in many ways similar to Alana’s office. Subtly decadent and yet full of absence.

She was immediately drawn to the figure in the centre of the room, taller than she’d imagined, and far more intimidating.

His eyes tracked her as she approached the glass.

She suddenly became all too conscious of every aspect of herself, her appearance, her demeanor, her pretend glasses. She forced her steps to sound confident and methodical on the hard floor.

Will had often been this observing, it was a familiar, if unpleasant, feeling.

When she reached the limit of how close she was willing to go, she began,

“Hello, Dr Lecter. Allow me to introduce myself, I’m Ms Townsend, a psychological researcher.”

His demeanor was friendly and warm, his accent far thicker than she’d imagined. “A pleasure Ms Townsend. It’s rare I’m allowed to have visitors these days. I must ask, what is you research topic?”

She feared her own fraudulence under his gaze as she had Alana's. She knew he'd written his own share of papers. Many of them considered seminal pieces of literature.

"Memory, and it's deterioration in..." She hesitated. "criminals."

"Ah you've come to the right person," he gestured his hands openly, "I am rather, a subject matter expert on memory."

"While I'd certainly love your professional view on the matter, I was rather hoping to hear you recount events from your own memory."

"Test it's sturdiness and so forth?" He offered.

She nodded, then admonished herself for it.

"Where shall we begin Ms Townsend? My history is a rather long and complicated one. I'd rather not bore you with details when I'm sure our time is limited."

She tried to come up with what a true researcher would ask. "Why don't you start from wherever you'd like, preferably someplace a little recent."

He smiled, "Perhaps I'll start from the day I met Will Graham. I believe that's where our mutual interests lie after all."

She was momentarily stunned.

He leaned in, offering a shared secret as if they were co-conspirators "I won't tell if you don't".

She could barely pull herself together, stammering her protest "It's not–"

"You wear him. His scent, his mannerism, his speech." There was no room for argument in his tone.

"Tell me, did he send you?"

"No. He did not." She could deny him this at least.

"Ah, very naughty Ms Townsend." He considered for a moment, "Would you give me your first name? I think it is only fair given you know mine."

She was going to say no but it would be admitting to being shaken. It was as much for her own inner confidence as her projected one that she relented.

"Molly. It's Molly"

He gave her an earnest smile that made her feel a little more at ease. She immediately fought the reaction.

Now that her pretence was broken, she stepped closed and whispered what she so desperately wanted to know, “What happened?”

He paused and began to walk away, making her feel all the more impatient for the answer.

“I was his psychiatrist.”

There was a real warmth to his tone that she wouldn’t of thought possible, and yet there it was. So familiar, wistful and caring all rolled into four neat words. It only served to confuse her more.

“and your brand of psychiatry?” She tried not to sound to skeptical even though it was hard to contain her disapproval.

“I am a sculptor, I find people with the right material, the right pliability, and I begin to tap my hammer. Over time they come to resemble something much, much, greater than themselves.”

She wondered if he was speaking of his patients or victims. Which one he considered Will Graham to be.

“What mold did you cast for him?”

He glanced at her with an air of mischief, “Will was hardly a material I could shape, or anyone else for that matter. The best we could do was influence each other. Deceive, guide, trust, betray, protect.”

She tried to process the list while he regarded her with obvious precision, his slow walk paused. “He has yet to tell you anything has he? He must like you a fair deal.”

He resumed and she finally found her voice and her next question. “The murders, they continued even after you framed him. Even when you could’ve stayed completely free, why?”

“Perhaps I was not the only one enjoying them.”

She felt a burst of anger at the insinuation. “If that were true you wouldn’t be here.”

She was beginning to hate the soft curious tone he kept using. Like a normal psychiatrist bringing up a traumatic event for her. “Are you aware of the circumstances of my arrest?”

She felt a small piece of triumph flow through her, “Will was the one who captured you. Convinced the FBI of your true nature.”

“Not quite.”

She didn’t want to ask, She didn’t want to ask, she di— “*Not quite?*”

“Not quite. I gave myself up.”

A now familiar sort of nervousness pulsed through her, “Why?”

She waited and he did not reply, only spurring her worries.

She went for the other weapon she carried, not even bothering to acknowledge the topic shift “You tried to drive him insane.”

Again a sense of wistful amusement crossed his face. She imagined she’d be dealing with a stone cold psychopath, not theses displays of open and genuine emotion. She thought briefly back to Alana’s comments and caring.

“ ‘Insanity is a minority of one’ and Will had always been his own minority long before he met me, somewhat owing to his particular talent of course.”

“Talent?” All she could do was keep reaching in for answers and feel her hand get stung. She had a vague sense of what Lecter may be referring to, some articles had called him the boy wonder, the crazy psychic.

“Will is rather famous for his abilities to see inside the heads of anyone. Particularly killers. Once upon a time it was my role to keep him from becoming overwhelmed.”

“You certainly didn’t help in that regard” She sensed his offence immediately and felt that nervousness creep in again.

“Didn’t I? Disassociation, delusions, panic attacks, gaps in time, all successfully treated and eradicated under my care.”

She thought back to another night, Will staring blankly into the wall in a world of his own making.

“Not completely...” She mumbled,

Hannibal of course had heard heard her, he dipped his head and caught her eyes, searching for and seeing something she could only imagine.

“Is that why you’re here?” He said it so softly, with so much care that she willingly forced one of the mutilated crime photos back into her mind. Seeing the picture of a girl with a mouth torn all the way to her ear. It helped harden her resolve.

“I’m here for the truth.” She repeated it too herself as well, enjoying the slight ring of justice to it.

“Truth? now that is a heavy task. Truth is filtered through morality and I’m afraid mine is rather different than most.”

She had come here to see a serial killer, she could cope with all that brought , but it was seeing her husband so clearly here that had her feeling dizzy.

“Tell me one of your truths then.”

He moved to a table in his cell and leafed through some papers she couldn’t see properly.

“My truth is, Will is no broken bird, he’s made of glass, refracting what he sees in a way that’s painful for all of us to bear. What did you see when you looked at your reflection Molly?”

She saw parts of herself she didn’t necessarily want to, parts of her father, parts of her insecure younger self. “I saw what I needed.”

He nodded, and seemed to share her emotion. “Confronting isn’t it?”

She stayed silent.

“Now here is the part so many miss, so pay close attention. Fragility is more dangerous than they think, glass shards are always quick to draw blood. Will has honed his fragility, molded it into a weapon better than I ever could……He bleeds like Christ bleeds.” The way he said the last part had her feeling like something else deep within him was slithering to the surface.

“Did you make him bleed Dr. Lecter?”

“Yes.”

She was slightly less sure on the next question. “Did he make you bleed?”

Now he truly did smile. “Yes.”

This was the furthest she could go. “Did he make others bleed?”

He walked away from his papers, came to stand only meters from her again.

“Yes.”

She knew it was time to leave, this was the point Alana had mentioned, she wanted to know one more thing, needed to know it more than anything.

“Would he do it again?”

She knew his words were skewed, that he was insane enough to kill dozens of people, and yet it felt like he knew everything with a deep certainty.

“Yes Molly, he will.”

She started to walk away before he’d even finished and could now only manage a quick glance backwards.

“I’m afraid it’s goodbye Dr. Lecter.”

She couldn’t see his expression anymore and was almost glad for it.

“Goodbye Molly, I hope we meet again soon. See you on the other side of fear.”

Chapter End Notes

Damn it's hard to write Hannibal. Also I have like little to no knowledge about the PHD stuff, I'mm only doing a Bachelors so idk lol. Anyway hope you enjoyed and please leave a comment!

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

She noticed something new in Will since her meeting. He was controlled, intensely so.

Slow movements with too much thought for them to be completely natural. His eyes constantly scanned back and forth, searching. It was so consistent it had become invisible. How much practice had he had?

Is this what he'd done with Hannibal? Controlled himself perfectly?

Then again, she tried to disregard most of what Hannibal had said, she did not want her paranoia to be the thing that that split them. She went round and round watching Will then feeling guilty for suspecting him.

She sometimes hugged him randomly when his back was turned, normally he stiffened and then relaxed. She tried to be as sporadic as she could, jumping on him, getting angry at odd points, stealing his fishing rod. She wanted to break him for just a moment, glimpse something. How could she live if she didn't?

Sometimes his featured flickered, went dark and cold, or faint and wistful. Those were her victories.

There was something else too. He was always watching her – or at least she was noticing it more – He saw her change her mind before she felt it, he knew that she would laugh or cry or get angry before she did.

It was having your privacy stolen from you in the most primitive of senses.

Wally becoming an unfortunate bystander in her mini tests. He'd walked in on her oneday when she was hiding behind the kitchen counter. In a completely insane move, she'd decided that today she'd watch Will come home while she was hidden. See if he'd behave differently without an audience.

Wally ducked behind the counter with her and whispered, "Who are we hiding from Mom? Are you okay?"

She felt so bad she instantly stood up. "We're not hiding from anyone sweetie, I just dropped something."

He gave her the annoyed look best articulated by kids "I'm not stupid. You were there for ages."

She sighed and started to panic when she heard approaching footsteps. "I'm sorry, I was just being an idiot. Don't worry okay?"

"Yeah, okay"

She let herself relax a little at Wally's acceptance. She now felt utterly ridiculous.

Will came in and gave them both a big smile. He held his arms open and Wally ran straight to him.

"Hey buddy! How was school?"

"It was booooring, Ms Robinson made us pick an animal and describe its habitat. Me and Jake cheated and made new habitats for our animals though."

Wally continued rattling off his story while she felt more and more admonished.

From then on she resolved that all of this would stay away from Wally. Always. She'd given him enough instability.

***

One night there was a crash.

Will was already awake, pulling on a t-shirt. She sleepily sat up and switched the lamp on.

"What was that?" she whispered

His voice was low and steady in response. "I don't know."

"Do you think it's an animal? Sounded big."

"Maybe, I think I should check."

Cold heat ran through her veins and chased the remnants of sleep away, she didn't want to be left alone, and she didn't want to send Will out there either.

But he was already pulling his shoes on, tying mud-stained laces with ruthless efficiency.

"Couldn't we just call the police?"

Before Will could answer there was another crash, louder, far closer.

They both froze, and waited. Listening for any other tell-tale sounds.

Will’s face was hard to make out turned away from the light, it was a fuzzy grey and she could only just make out the place where eyes, nose and mouth was. When he faced the light again she could immediately read what he silently articulated, it was an answer to her question. *The police would be too slow.*

She had never seen him actually handle the shot gun they kept. When his fingers twisted around the barrel, the reality of everything quickly solidified.

He held the shotgun to his side and glanced out the window.

After awhile she couldn’t stand his silence "See anything?".

He shook his head slowly.

He came back and sat on the bed with her. Whispering like she had, "I won't be long, I'm just going to check. Go get Wally."

She nodded feeling worse by the second. The ever-present silence was killing her, it felt inevitable that it would be broken at any moment.

She reminded herself that Will had once been apart of the FBI, that this couldn't be anything worse than that.

The thought lended her enough courage to get her out of bed and say a silent goodbye to Will.

Wally was already awake when she reached him, staring out the window and into the pitch black trees.

He ran to her as soon as she opened the door and she held a finger to her mouth signalling quiet. He nodded and together they went downstairs, she winced at every creak.

It was cold in the living room, a sign that Will had already opened the door and left. They sat on the couch hugging and waiting for something to happen.

They both jumped when there was another crash and the sounds of faint grunting.

Wally started to cry and she hugged him tighter shushing him. She wished they had kept an extra gun, she would've been aiming it at whatever came through the door.

A bolt of shock pierced her as the door banged opened. It raced through every nerve.

Will threw a disheveled looking man inside.

Even in her snap paralysis, she recognised him. His dusty brown hair and stupid striped jumper immediately connecting. It was Tim, her last ex-boyfriend.

Wally recognised him too, relaxing a little against her.

She quietly talked in his ear, "Everything is fine honey, go upstairs to your room and I'll come see you in a minute."

Wally obediently left and she looked at Will who was staring judgmentally at Tim, half annoyed and amused. He pulled up a chair and pushed Tim into it. Tim had already begun slurring out half sentences,

" I was just tryanna' see..... it wasssn't.... why the gun dude, scared me half to death, wasss jus' tryanna' see -"

Finally Tim seemed to notice her and immediately cheered up.

"Molly! Yous' one I'm looking for."

All her previous fear was quickly dissolving into straight anger. She walked over and and raised her hand up to slap him, then paused and relaxed it when he winced.

"I can't even begin to tell you how much I hate you right now. You come to my house in the middle of the night, scare the living crap out of me, out of us, just to be.... what?"

She was glad when his brief happiness at seeing her snuffed out.

"I wish I had called the police so they could put you in a cell and I didn't have to look at your god awful face for another second."

"I'm sorry-"

"Another word and I swear, I'll have you in the ER."

Will discreetly held her hand and she relaxed a bit. She wondered how it was he knew who Tim was. She had a few old photos of them Facebook she suspected might of been the culprits.

Despite her warning, Tim continued to talk. "I'm sorry Molls, really. But you didn't have to sick *him* on me.... comes out of the woods all quiet and stuff, freaking me the hell out. Then he pins me to the tree before I even moved!"

She found she had very little sympathy.

"Why are you here Tim?"

"I just wanted to sees you, you know? I don't like how we ended things.."

"Let me be crystal clear. I want you gone, now. I don't care how we ended things, I don't care if you want to see me again, I moved on."

Tim glanced at Will and his face soured, "Guess this is mister 'moved on'. All cheek bones and hair. Very intimidating you know, has the eyes...."

Will stayed silent and looked to her for direction.

She felt the tiredness of the night begin to catch up with her all at once.

She grabbed Tim by the arm and pulled him towards the door.

"Goodbye Tim."

He looked hurt and started sulking but finally, opened the door.

"See ya Molly, I'm sorry, I know I Shouldn'a done this. I know..."

He was clearly waiting for her to protest. Make some last-chance remark. She just stared at him.

He finally relented and closed the door behind himself.

She immediately leapt to the couch. Feeling the intense need to lie down.

As she closed her eyes she felt Will's presence near her.

"You alright?"

"No, I'm dead tired and my asshole ex is a complete asshole."

She was rewarded with a low rumble of laughter.

"He was an idiot more than an asshole. Something about that sweater screamed I'm willing to do anything to degrade myself."

She realised that Tim had probably gotten Will riled up too,

"You okay?"

"I'm fine. A little colder and annoyed but nothing that can't be fixed quickly."

She felt relaxed and started to drift a little. Unfortunately, a small thought burst her paradise.

"Shit."

"What?"

"I promised Wally I'd go see him."

"I'll do it."

If she was not more tired she would've kissed him in gratitude.

"You're amazing you know."

Again he laughed. Suddenly she felt the best she'd had in weeks, realising that this was what she'd been missing.

He lightly ghosted her palm and then left to go see Wally.

***

It was difficult to go back to the hospital slash prison. To see him again. Part of her argued she'd done enough, that she knew enough to cope with whatever came. The other part of her told her she was a coward.

She knew she shouldn't believe a word but she could now see glass when she looked at Will. The light bouncing off him in the strangest of angles. She could see no fissures, no jagged edges but she was sure that if she glided her hand across its surface she'd be pricked. She'd pull her hand away bleeding and watch the small blood stains drip across the glass.

Her skin was hick and she could stand to lose a little blood. It was nothing if it meant this small thing they'd captured burned a little longer. The gratitude she felt on the couch the other night.

Hannibal Lecter was the key to her husband and there was no denying it. She knew she ought to have felt some anger about that, be mad that in order to access her own partner she needed to go through someone else. But dogged realism had always been her strength and she knew Will was a tangle way beyond her knot skills.

Alana welcomed her back, cordially and with an underlying ferocity that Molly sensed went a little deeper.

Alana certainly seemed surprised at her reappearance and she was very eager to see the fake thesis. Politely declining, she instead asked the question she'd been thinking since her last visit.

"Why did Hannibal turn himself in?"

A long-suffering weariness seemed to eclipse Dr. Bloom. Taking over that professional exterior. "It would require understanding Hannibal to answer that, and I don't think there's a single psychiatrist on this earth that's capable."

Another non-answer then, great.

Alana repeated the instructions from last time then left her at the door of a now familiar cell.

Neither of them said much, Alana simply giving one final warning.

"Don't overdo it, 10 minutes or less."

She'd read a fiction book once where the men who tried to map the deserts of the world went insane. They drove others insane too, but their information was useful to the community so a new rule was established. 7 minutes or less, you had 7 minutes to talk to mapmakers or you too would join in on their insanity. She felt like she was doing that now, the timer tipping as she stepped into the room and found a pair of steel eyes waiting for her.

"One might think you're becoming fond of me Ms Townsend. I cannot say I see many researchers repeat their visitations so quickly. "

"Fond is a strong word."

He let out a small puff of air that might have been a laugh "*Strong.* Strength in language is a strange thing. You came here, to find your own strength in my words, draw knowledge from my sentences, clauses and conjugations. Tell me, is it all that you'd hoped? Or do the consonants fall flat?"

Everything felt flat. Being in this room felt flat and 2 dimensional. She felt compressed between the flaky paper walls. It was dizzying and hot. If she could've she would have gotten a chair.

"I haven't come to a consensus. You haven't told me much yet."

"Much about our mutual acquaintance? He is the reason you're here after all…. why? Is his madness still waiting?"

Unsteadily she brushed away the question. "I'm simply here to ask a few things."

"What will it be today I wonder? will you tiptoe around, circling fear and trepidation or will you take the blind jump?"

" I- I'm not here to be judged, or to have my conviction tested. Either you'll tell me or you won't. There's little else I can do."

"There's much you can do. Let us not forget the daunting notion of our own free will, dizzy as it makes us on cliff edges. You're rather quick to obscure your own sense of choice, purposely eradicating its accompanying anxieties in favour of conviction. Allow me to re-contexualise things for you."

"Are you offering a choice?" She asked skeptically.

"Yes."

She waited not so patiently to hear it,

"I will answer everyone of your questions today if you indulge me in my own arena."

"Which is?"

"I'd like you to dine with me Molly."

Bile slid up her throat as she entertained the suggestion. Nightmarish visions of fingers in soups and eyeballs in pie. She glanced once more at cell, noting that he hadn't been out for two years.

"Why would you want to dine with *me*?"

His stare bore through her, she felt as if her every molecule was being examined.

"Because there has to be something in you. A reason."

She swallowed, feeling the dryness of her mouth. "And if I accept?"

"You'll be a welcome guest, privy to my infamous cooking. Additionally, I prefer truths at my table, stimulates the conversation better I think. I'll offer you mine in exchange for yours."

To hell with it, she'd already come here. "I accept."

"Would 6:30 Wednesday suit?"

***

She came home with an odd feeling of joy and after locking the front door she let herself feel it.

She couldn't wait for Will to return so she could share her good mood with him, perhaps it was time for another night of takeout and cheesy movies.

While she waited Wally and her played three rounds of Go Fish. She lost two and won the last one much to Wally's joy. He had proposed that they play cards every monday night since 'that was clearly the best day for cards'. She had laughed and argued that Saturdays were better since he didn't have school which meant she could play all day. Unsurprisingly he immediately relented.

It was about 7:30 Will arrived home. He was slightly more ruffled and slow than usual.

He, in one of his strange quirks, started to make himself a black coffee. She took over making it for him and he gave her a grateful nod.

She spoke while changing the coffee filter, “I was thinking we could watch a movie. Preferably something under the 99 cents section.”

“That would be nice.”

She frowned at the way he said it, so airy and distant.

“How are you feeling Will?”

They’d done this before, when the nightmare got really bad or in the days when they’d first met. She would guide him back eventually and they’d be able to continue.

He looked at her but still felt far away. “I feel…… a rocked. Like a small boat against the tides.”

“What’s throwing you around Will?” “…. I don’t know.”

She held her breath, "Is the madness waiting?"

Something changed so fundamentally in Will at that moment. He morphed into something entirely different and yet nothing physically changed other than the slow tilt of his head and the intensity of his eyes, he was no longer distant at all.

"Those are not your words."

Small drips of guilt began to creep in from the back of her neck. A third name was now in the room with them and she had brought it here.

Why she had been stupid enough to ever repeat Hannibal’s words in the first place was beyond her. Perhaps it was the self-destructive aspects of her that wanted to finally let go of the grenade. See what it would do.

Now he knew, with absolute certainty.

Her voice ran before her mind could, "Will I'm so sorry, I promise I've said nothing, it’s just __ "

She cut herself off as she watched him. He stayed stony faced and unmoving, yet not furious as he should be.

Something horrible dawned her, a thought only made possible by the impassiveness of Wills face, his unconcerned stance. His apathy.

"You knew." She said breathlessly.

His gaze flickered downward "I knew".

She took a step backward, when? how? some of the answers she could already sense.

"You *wanted* me to go there, didn't you? you didn't even try to stop me. Why?"

A thousand things went rushing through her mind. Two options stood out.

He was talking and she tried hard to tune it back in.

" --couldn't tell you myself and I knew you needed to know. So I was leaving the choice up to you." There was an intense sincerity and rawness to his voice.

It sounded true. It felt true.

But there was another reason she couldn't devote space too, so she abandoned it.

"I can't believe you knew. How long?"

"From when you came back…..after the first time." He was using everything that normally worked, the soft spoken sadness. The genuine glint of trust.

She felt almost a little dizzy. "How?"

He sighed, "Everything. There's a thousand ways I could tell you."

She held up her hand. "You know what I don't even want to know. I.... I need some time to process. "

He nodded, "I'll go away for a little while. Just.... just call me when you want me."

She watched from the kitchen window as he got in the car and left, the tire tracks leaving black marks on the patchy snow. The sound of the silence kept repeating one thing to her. *He knew, he knew, he knew*.

Chapter End Notes

idk how to feel about this chap :(hopefully it's not too bad. Fun fact, I was writing the scene with Molly's ex way too late at night and there was a really loud noise at my own house! it was just a painting falling but honestly scared me ironically.

End Notes

Thanks :)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!